

The Pocahontas Times.

If thou would'st read a lesson that will keep Thy heart from fainting and thy soul from sleep, Go to the woods and hills.—Longfellow.

Vol. 21, No. 28.

Marlinton, Pocahontas County, West Virginia, April 16, 1933.

\$1.00 a Year

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A SERMON

"The Common People Heard Him Gladly,"—Mark 12, 13.

Preached by Rev. J. L. Fish, Episcopalian Church, Elkins, on Palm Sunday, at the Presbyterian Church, Mingo.

At your leisure, it will be well to look into the history and read of the condition of the common people during Christ's life upon earth under Roman treatment by Jewish authorities, and by the term "common," I don't think we are understand the lower classes of the people but the general run of them.

It will simply be necessary to look at the characters of some of those who were in power to enable us to understand, in a measure at least, the circumstances under which the people lived. A few years before the birth of Christ, Julius Caesar perished in the Senate Chamber, at Rome, pierced by the daggers of Brutus and other assassins. At a great victory at a place named Pharsalia, he had struck down his only rival, Pompey, and had gained what call "the power of the whole world," in his single hand. His nephew, Octavius, the Second Caesar, and surnamed Augustus, was, at the time Jesus was born, Monarch of the World; he was looked upon as having unlimited power; he could do what he pleased with the properties and liberties of every man, woman and child, of more than three hundred millions of people composing the Roman Empire.

Judas had passed into a state of moral decadence. The Jews, who had been blessed with a splendid equipment at the beginning of their career, were at the time like a spend thrift man, whose substance is all wasted and who is in a state of poverty.

There were evidences of life and if we could have been there, we would very likely have noticed the characteristics of the Jewish Nation, which had survived the somewhat general decay, but their political liberties were all gone. They were under the heel of Roman Despotism: the Temple was there—a magnificent temple, built by King Herod. So magnificent was it, that as Farrar says, "because of which the Jews had almost become reconciled to an intolerable tyranny." They had a ritual, which according to the standard of that age, would be considered splendid, but their priesthood was corrupt. For the most part we are told the priestly office was filled by Sadducees, and they were not men of faith in God or his Word. They were politicians—Ecclesiastical politicians: they sought office, they did not seek to improve the morals of the people, or to perpetuate the worship of God. They served for reward; they took the best of what was brought to the temple for offering Malachi, how God hates and condemns that kind of thing. For 400 years they had not been spoken to by a Prophet of the Lord; the Scribes read elaborate commentaries on the Law, discussed minute and insignificant questions but did not concern themselves about the morals of the people.

The Common people received no consideration from the Sadducees; the Scribes were heartless; the Roman was in power and he did not forget to let the Jew know it; the Jews in authority were not to be depended upon, so that those lot it was to be ruled, and not to rule had little to brighten life as they thought of the past, the memory of which made the present all the darker. It was among such people and under such circumstances that Jesus went about day after day and to such did he speak, and the Divine Historian says the Common People, the every day people, the people, many of whom had little, and who, so far as worldly learning was concerned, knew little, the people

who had long thought life monotonous, with no outlook but a continuation of what they were passing through—these people heard Him Gladly.

Why did they hear him gladly? They could understand him; he spoke in simple language, such as they could easily understand; His teaching was simple; they could remember what He said because he illustrated his teachings by referring to everyday events, and because he applied what he had to say in an everyday fashion. The Scribes and Pharisees were argumentative and labored to prove their statements; they had position to maintain, and were careful only about doing so; Jesus had an object in his teaching, too, he had most important truth to make known to the people, and took the plainest and shortest way to reach his end; He spoke to the Common People, and in doing so drew illustrations from their own life; we cannot learn that he tried any dramatic oratory; he told simple stories, but always with a good end in view; he took hold of the truth, He sought to teach; He took the essentials of truth and reduced them to a few great principles, and this meant a great deal; He had to meet the Pharisees, who were great on traditions; the Sadducees, who were the sceptical worldlings of the day; the Essenes who were the dreamers of that day; the Scribes who were the Philosophers of the day; the Epicureans, who would delight in life, and be careless, and the Stoics, who would despise it and be passionless. And when they came to him, asking for an explanation of his teachings, he gave them some short sentences, containing a world of meaning, and enough to serve them to think about all their life: "Ye must be born again"; "Render to Caesar the things that be Caesar's, and to God the things which be God's"; "Master what shall we do to this woman? Let him that is without sin first cast a stone"; they were concerned about Fasts, Feasts etc, according to Dr. Abbott. To those who wanted to follow out the teaching of the Rabbis, there was a life work mapped out; there were numberless and bewildering ordinances and laws; the Rabbis had proclaimed that there were 613 precepts to be remembered and observed in daily practice, some of them light, and some of them heavy, and hence the question which the Lawyer asked him, "Master, which is the great commandment in the Law? was something for him to think about; they divided the Law into what was called greater and smaller commandments; some held that the law relating to sacrifice was the most important; others the law relating to purifying, while others held that the greatest was the law relating to circumcision; the answer which Jesus gave was a master stroke, he said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and all thy soul and all thy mind this is the first great commandment, and the second is like unto it, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself'; on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets, never mind the remaining 611. There was not much in that to remember, in that everybody keep them in mind, but imagine a poor seeker delving told that he might hope to obtain the favor of God, when he could live up to and remember hundreds of precepts; Jesus ignored their chaff, and gave them grains of wheat instead.

Two little girls at play with their dolls began to talk about their disappointments, when one asked the other if she told Jesus about her broken doll; Why, said the other one, do you think Jesus cares for the troubles of little ones like us? yes said the other one, he cares for every one, that is just what he is for; exactly so my friends, he is a brother born for adversity. The common people discovered this and they listened eagerly.

He made God real to them; of course God was real as manifested in the old testament; he manifested himself to them in various ways and at various times, but when the teachers became corrupt and self seeking, the knowledge of the God they professed to represent, became dimmed and his personality became vague and when Jesus came, religion received but little attention. As some one has said, the Jewish religion at best was but a kind of spiritual politics; and we are told that the multitude looked upon their leaders—much as we would look upon an officer of the law: they had academics and ceremonies, and philosophers and temples, and schools of thought and professors, digests of law, and military harangues, and almost everywhere, there was what might be termed a creed, but so far as we can learn, in no sense, a faith, a pulpit, a gospel of goodness or a church, so there was no real teaching about God: everything had become vague, and religion was a dead unsatisfactory kind of thing. Jesus taught that God was and is, the supreme God; that true religion was life because God was in it; he taught them that he had come from the Father and that he was going back to him again, and that he had opened a channel of communication between God and mankind; he told them that they might draw near to God in spirit; He taught them that above the social and affectionate nature is the spiritual, because above the husband, wife, father, mother, is God, above all earthly social life is the life of communion with God, and to enjoy Him is the supreme bliss, and to live with Him the supreme life.

The Common People heard Him Gladly because—He made life joyous by inspiring hope in them; He gave them to see the value of the human soul, and the possibility of enjoying life because God was in the world. A man who feels himself to be the mere tool and plaything of caprice, or under the heel of some despotic power, does not feel like making plans for his life; does not look forward but has lost hope; these people had lost all interest in religion and when the generations of men

with authority, and first of all convinced them that he was no ordinary being, but somebody to whom it was well for them to listen; this led them to value his sympathy he then gave them to understand that he was touched with the feeling of their infirmities. The common people were quick to perceive this, and hence you will find such statements as "And the multitudes came together", again, "They came to him from every quarter", "He could not be hid", "The people thronged him", "They ran thither out of all cities", "all men seek for the", "O, you say, it was curiosity not by any means, "And they ran through the region round about, and began to carry in beds, those that were sick", and withersoever he went in cities or towns they brought out the sick and laid them in the streets, sure of his sympathy and help; his enemies stigmatized him, "the friend of sinners"; "I have compassion on the multitude he said," "behold, how he loved him", said they who gathered around the grave of Lazarus. Louis Kosuth said, "the woes of millions of his fellow countrymen were on his heart"; we admire such a spirit, but what is it to compare with the sympathy of him who bore our griefs and carried our sorrows, who was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities.

loose interest in religion, and neglect it, they are apt to lose all hope. Josephus says: The Jewish Nation at this time was addicted to every vice, and had not Christ come, the institution must soon have destroyed itself.

Now, Jesus made life joyous by bringing hope to men and women; He said, "God pities you," "I bring glad tidings," "I am come that you might have life, and have it more abundantly." God is not a stern, penalty exacting ruler, merely, He is your father, and would save you from your sins, and make you glad with his favor; so the Common People heard Him Gladly. He told about the man who had lost the sheep, and the woman who had lost her piece of silver, and about the father whose prodigal son left home, and he said that in the rejoicing of the man when his sheep was found and of the woman when her silver was found and the father when his boy returned, we have an illustration of how the Father rejoices when men return from their wicked ways. The Common People soon found out the difference between His teaching and the teaching of the dry, unsympathetic Scribes and Pharisees, and they came to Him whenever they could find Him; He always sought to raise their hopes.

The Common People heard Him Gladly because He was not afraid to speak out the convictions of His mind; they saw that He set Himself against the established order: there were few rich and many poor; few learned and many ignorant; he paid little if any deference to wealth; he paid little if any deference to worldly wisdom; if the wealthy man was not using his wealth for the good of others and the glory of God, he was spoken as plainly as anybody else, and perhaps a trifle plainer than most, if the wise man was using his wisdom only for his own aggrandizement, and that he might retain a name and position among men, he was given to understand how little he really did know.

You and I may not see much in this, but the people of His time saw it and if ever He had shown that he was afraid to speak for the Roman Powers, or Pharisaical criticisms, or Sadducean septicism, they would have thought Him no better than the Priests and other teachers who had sought to secure a following before. There is no class quicker to discern this than those who are held in unnatural restraint.

Jesus assailed the very men who treated him with contempt or at least with indifference and who were most in power; we have no better proof of this than the spirit which characterizes some of His servants today, has from His time till now; His life has been translated into His followers, and many a man has laid down his life since the day of Christ on earth, rather than be false to the convictions of his mind.

In the 15th Century, a duke whom the populace gave the name of Lorenzo the Magnificent, was ruling in Florence; Savonarola, a priest and monk was living at the same time he was a faithful soul, though he had a first but small publicity; by and by he became more notorious; at length he was called to preach in the great Cathedral, and as his fame had traveled, the Cathedral was full; Five Christians, cautious men, came and said, "be careful, don't sacrifice your influence, don't say anything against Lorenzo, we know he is corrupt, but just think of what he has done for us, and think of his position and power; he is popular with the people, don't disturb him, don't attack him. The tall priest raised himself to his full height, and as his eyes flashed, said, "I shall remain, and Lorenzo the Magnificent shall perish," and he was right, his name lives today. In the account of the Duke's death we are told that he sent for Savonarola, and dressed in his priestly garments he entered the room of the dying Duke;

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DOWN TO MILLPOINT

Wayside Notes Gathered by Rev. Wm. T. Price.

The Trip Down—The Marriage Ceremony—A Visit Among Friends, and the Voyage Back.

As was generally expected Tuesday April 7, 1933, the first day of the April term of Pocahontas circuit court came around with the usual cold rain and much mud, the writer remained indoors occupied in a study of Solomon's Song and while thus engaged with the beautiful words and charming thoughts of the Song of Songs, his attention was called to two persons coming through the front gate of Inframonte Cottage and he went to meet them at the door. It turned out to be Thomas Ware and Charles Chapman, a young man who wants a big fat preacher to say the words for him.

We have called in to see whether you could be persuaded to get on the cars this evening and stop at Seebert, where you will be met by some one with a buggy and he will show you where to go, they soon found out that the big fat preacher was more than willing for the trip.

So there was now a few hours of pleasant anticipation of a trip to the Marvin neighborhood, and at train time I was at the station considerably in advance of the arrival of the cars. Pastor Nickel was there to see a friend off, a Mr. Appling, from Gap Mills, Monroe county. It turned out that Mr. Appling could tell me something about the first lady I ever escorted to church from Hillsboro to the old brick Oak Grove meeting house, which memorable event in my personal history came off in 1848. Her present home is near Gap Mills, and the story of her life has been thrilling as a romance, judging from the few particulars told by Mr. Appling preacher said the words that were wanted and two young people set out for their new home in Garret county, four miles from Deer Park. The parting scene was pathetic and suggestive, between the only daughter and the parents by whom she was idolized as so obedient, dutiful and helpful.

"O what will my home be now without my daughter. It almost breaks my heart to think of it," expressed the feelings of parental hearts, in the first hours of their loneliness.

A brief and pleasant walk rounded up at Joseph Smith's, where a few fleeting enjoyable hours were passed. Then Mr. Smith shouldered a pouch filled with oats and bran and showed me his flock, as we climbed the slopes towards the Bridger Notch. We parted at the Notch, where the scenery is so beautiful that one cannot well avoid thoughts of celestial scenes, we parted with mutual good wishes, to stand together some day where they sing the Song of Moses and the Lamb. Then it was a matter of but a few minutes over the velvet sod to reach the home where Capt James M. McNeill, a model patriotic citizen, spends the closing years of an honored life, reading and talking good sense, and with philosophic resignation endures without a murmur, the grievous affliction that has disabled him for the active duties he would love so well to perform.

Next day at an early hour with Douglas McNeill, I set out for Buckeye station, where he teaches the public school. The river was quite swollen but my escort was a skillful boatman and in Colbert Duncan's large red boat the crossing of the flood turned out to be one of the most enjoyable incidents experienced in the varieties of locomotion that were resorted to during this excursion in question. Doc McNeill and son Rush were also in the boat arranging to transport three yearling, as the water was regarded too dangerous. One was carried over and no

might be some mistake and this was greatly intensified when a party like what I expected had been in town with a conveyance; but had gone, as someone told me.

While feeling my bluest, and the clouds becoming thicker, George Clendennia comes around and remarks "Brother Billy I have come to tell you supper is ready and so you must go with me." This I gladly did and met Miss Birdie Baxter, who is well on with her second term of public school.

"Well who is it you are going to marry now?" I tried to caution her not to tempt me, by asking questions, and that I wanted all the young people to know that I could keep secrets, and may be her time may come, and I wanted to have her confidence. "Oh!" she says, "If my time ever comes I will want every body to know it long before hand and I will have it published in the papers if I can get it done." Just then Mrs. Clendennia helped me out of the tangle by calling all to the dining room and the subject was changed.

While enjoying the biscuit and coffee, at which she is such an expert, Brother George called up the recollection of the first time he ever saw "Brother Billy." It was at the Marlinton Bridge in 1856, while he was just a mere boy, and Brother Billy spoke to him friendly and asked him to stop and get dinner.

I at once thought of what the Bible says about casting bread upon the waters, and that now I had found it after 47 years, in the shape of such biscuits fruits and coffee as were well worth waiting for and finding under the circumstances.

When I arose from the repast I found the long looked for buggy in waiting and so while the evening shadows were falling, Tom Ware and I had our ride over the new road and through the picturesque scenery for which the Little Levels are so celebrated.

A very enjoyable evening was spent a delightful sleep was had and at an early hour the big fat preacher said the words that were wanted and two young people set out for their new home in Garret county, four miles from Deer Park. The parting scene was pathetic and suggestive, between the only daughter and the parents by whom she was idolized as so obedient, dutiful and helpful.

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sooner released from the boat it plunged into the river to regain its mates. About the time it seemed ready to give up and be drowned, the owners overtook it and ran over it. When it came to the surface it was caught by the ears and tugged to the bank where it laid seemingly limp and helpless. Upon being placed with its head down hill the water poured from its mouth, in a little while it shook its ears, caught its breath and almost instantly stood up and went to cropping grass.

With another of the calves it was put into the boat and ferried over and then the third was carried over and when last seen all three were gently moving towards their new home, wiser and better yearlings. Owing to hinderances the train did not come in on time and this gave me an opportunity to visit John Buckley's nice and hospitable family. For the last 35 years Mr. Buckley has been one of the best known pilots on the Greenbrier River and a skillful oarsman. In all that time no accident has befallen any one he has undertaken to ferry over the deep Buckley eddy, while it is true some have been ducked in crossing, it was accidently on purpose as a freak of merriment on the part of the famous oarsman.

C. W. Currence, the pension swindler, tried a suicide bluff, but it was called. A bottle of carbolic acid had been given him with which to wash his feet. He carefully applied some of it to his mouth, emptied the bottle, raised the alarm and had a convulsion. Currence is known in different parts of this county, having swindled several persons in the Loblilia neighborhood.

A dispatch dated at Elkins says that gold has been discovered on the Coal & Iron Railroad in paying quantities, analysis showing the ore to contain \$20 worth of gold to the ton, besides enough silver to pay for the mining.

A party of immigrants made up of 73 men, women and children left Hinton Tuesday for the State of Oregon, where the expect to settle. The party is principally made up from the vicinity of Jumping Branch, Summers County.

There is a movement on foot in the Northern branch of the Presbyterian Church to form a separate synod of the churches in West Virginia. They are now members of the Synod of Pennsylvania.

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